



Thinking Outside of the Box

Materials Needed:

Box
Sticky Notes
Poster papers
Video: "The Danger of a Single Story"

Learning Objectives:

1. Think critically about how they felt about the homeless community before they started service compared to now.
2. Analyze how pervasive stereotypes and "single stories" can impact a community.
3. Empower them to think of actions they can take beyond this semester to understand the systemic issues surrounding homelessness.

Overview:

- Introductions/Check-in
- Video Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story
- Box activity
- Revisit FACE assessments
- Throughout: What, So What, Now What

Discussion Questions:

Check-in (5 minutes): One word to describe how you are feeling

What: one memorable event/person from your experience at ECS and one thing that surprised you about the site

Video (20 minutes)

Single Story (So What) Questions (20 minutes)

1. What are your initial reactions/take aways from the video?
2. Write two single stories you heard about the Tenderloin community and/or ECS shelter residents. Read them aloud and then place them in the box. If you cannot think of any single stories try to think of stereotypes.
3. How do you think these single stories are perpetuated?
4. What effect do you think single stories have on the ECS community, the Tenderloin community?
5. What is the danger of maintaining those single stories of those we encounter? Why?
6. After working with the people of ECS, think about two full stories you have learned from people you have worked with. Again, if this is too difficult to think of something personal, try to think of the assets and strengths of the community you learned through your service. Put these on the outside of the box as you say them aloud.
7. How did it feel to write the single and full stories? How did they differ?
8. What memories came up for you when you wrote the single stories and the full stories?
9. Why is it important to think outside the box to challenge single stories?
10. What needs to be done in order to end the pervasiveness of single stories of ECS residents or the greater Tenderloin and homeless communities?
11. Pass out FACE assessments:
 - a. Were your assumptions challenged? How?
 - b. Did service meet all of your expectations?
 - c. Did you experience the challenges you thought you would? Or did you experience different ones? How did you overcome them?
 - d. Were your initial expectations met or challenged? How did your perceptions change?

Now What Questions: Break into small groups to brainstorm ideas (15 minutes)

12. What can you do to help end these single stories about the homeless and Tenderloin communities?
13. What are the root causes of homelessness? Think about the types of people you have met and what we have talked about in the reflections.
14. Now What: So beyond the single story how can you address homelessness on individual, group, agency, political, and societal levels?
15. Where do we go from here? What's the next step? What policies What policies/laws impact this agency/population/issue?

Results:

This reflection actually worked really well especially for ACEs who have students who are shy to speak. I knew the FACE assessments would be too difficult to have a long conversation about, so I used it as a point of reference for their activity to help them think deeper. Having them brainstorm single and complete stories and then having them come and place them as they read them aloud in the center of the room adds not only a bit of dramatic importance, but gets everyone to speak. Even though a quarter of my students, do not like to speak, this was not too much for them because they got to brainstorm and write it before they could read it in front of everyone. This mix of facilitation--watching a video, brainstorming, writing, sharing, and discussing benefited the diverse group of students.

Suggested Modifications:

For myself, I needed to work on the Now What questions. People came up with some great ideas, but there was not enough time to discuss this part, which I knew beforehand. This activity maybe needs more than an hour so there is no sense of urgency to move on to the next segment.